

HB 458 – Rep. Jeff Welborn (S) Business, Labor, Economic Affairs – March 28, 2011 HB 458

HJR 24 (1993 Session) required the Private Lands/Public Wildlife Council to:

Secure free access to hunt private land for sportsmen

Compensate landowners for the impacts of hunting on their land

Ensure a viable outfitting industry

1995 Legislature adopted the PL/PW recommendation to create the outfitter sponsored license (OSL)

The OSL for contracted nonresident clients was the tool to “ensure a viable industry” which funded the enhanced Block Management program, which provided compensation for landowners and free hunting access for hunters [currently > 9 million acres]

The PL/PW was “nervous” about providing this benefit to the outfitting industry without companion legislation to curtail a possible growth in the industry spurred by the OSL.

The “companion bill,” created Net Client Hunter Use (NCHU) as a tool to curtail growth within the industry. This was HB 196 and it contained other measures aimed at the Board of Outfitters.

In essence, NCHU was a yoke accepted by the outfitting industry in exchange for the OSL

Net Client Hunter Use (NCHU) refers to **permission slips** that an outfitter must have in order to serve a client – any client, even a bird hunter. Outfitters either declared NCHU as a result of historical use or were forced to get some from the Montana Board of Outfitters (MBO) through the expansion process.

1999 Legislature tightened up NCHU expansion process:

\$2,000 application fee, more than 8 hard gates to approval (\$2,000 not refundable)

\$5,000 fee for each camp > 100 miles from base camp and in another FWP region

NCHU was an acceptable YOKE in exchange for the privilege of knowing a contracted client would receive a license to hunt – the outfitter sponsored license.

I-161 amended Title 87 – FWP law – to eliminate the OSL, but the YOKE codified in Title 37 – Board of Outfitter law – remains. HB 458 seeks to remove two parts of that yoke:

The expansion process through the Board of Outfitters

The 100-mile - \$5,000 for extra camp law

Without the benefit of the OSL, the outfitting industry has no need for growth controls. Risking every contracted client to the luck of the draw is enough control on these Montana businesses.

Please support HB 458 in Committed and on the Senate floor. Thank you.

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- Ensure a viable outfitting industry

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